





Masterpieces

of

The Maharajadhiraj Lakshmishwar Singh Museum Darbhanga

Shiva Kumar Mishra



Royal Ivory Chair, Acc. No.- 26



Ivory Chair, Acc. No.- 31



Tusk Pedestal, Acc No.- 760/ 77 (28)

Cover Page Photos: Upper- (Left) Mahishamardini (Ivory), Acc No.- 924/ 77 (27), (Right) Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh, Lower- Ivory Throne, Acc No.- 5

Masterpieces of
The Maharajadhiraj Lakshmishwar Singh Museum, Darbhanga

In 1880, Maharaja Lakshmishwara Simha occupied the throne of Darbhanga Raj and was succeeded in 1898 by Maharaja Rameshwara Simha. He belonged to the famous Khandavala dynasty of Mithila. For the kings of Mithila there was the glorious tradition of the philosoper king Raja Janaka. And quite in keeping with this tradition the Khandavala rulers also took more pride in being called learned panditas than wealthy Rajas. A distinguished scion of an illustrious House, a zealous patron of learning and art, a ruler of unique foresight and under- standing, a great patriot and legislator, a bold reformer and, above all, a gentlemen par excellence, Maharaja Lakshmishwara Simha was one of the few charming personalities of the age whose influence was keenly felt in all the walks of Maithila life. He was born on 25 September 1858. He was only two years old when his father died. On the pretext of the minerhood of the heir apparent the Darbhanga Raj was placed under the 'court of wards'. Thus the 'court of wards' paid close attention to the upbringing as well as the education of the Darbhanga princes. He was a voracious reader and could afford to indulge his taste for wide range of books. He was a great lover of art and music.

The Raj Darbhanga family donated art objects to the Bihar Government to establish a museum in the memory of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh in 1979. The museum is situated on the eastern bank of the Mansarovar or Digghipokhar near Darbhanga Railway Station. The Museum has got such priceless objects which cannot be found in any other Museums. The Museum is manly famous for its decorative art objects. Its possess about fifteen hundred art objects carved on various medium of expressions.

This museum falls under the category of personalia museum which houses art objects related to the Royal family of Darbhanga. The museum possesses art objects made of ivory, metal, marble and stone, wood, china clay, arms, etc. The royal throne of Maharaja of Darbhanga is one of the best exhibits of the museum which is made of wood and metal plated. The metal plating is full of various decorations. The lower part of throne is inlaid with the ivory and the upper part is decorated with the precious and semi-precious stones. The chhatra of throne is also highly decorated.

Among the ivory objects, mention may be made of bed, hauda, palki, sofa set, royal chair, statue of Mahishasuramardini, etc. which were made by the artisans of Murshidabad, West Bengal. Hauda was made by Shri Murari Mohan Bhaskar. Murshidabad was a great center of ivory objects and the specimens available in this museum represents their mastery.

Vase, shield, decorated small temple are several objects made of metal. The Vase is decorated with small figures and inscriptions in devanagari script. Shields depict stories of Markandeya Purana and inscriptions in devanagari script. The museum also houses several specimens of Bidri art. Bidri art originated about 500 years ago in the Bidar village of Karnataka. It is a popular art form among South Indian handicrafts consisting metal ware of different shapes and sizes. Developed in

Bahmani kingdom, it was a blend of local styles of Turkey, Persia and Arabic countries.

Sculptures of Uma-Maheshwara, Buddha, Gayatri, Nandi, Lion, etc. are among the marble and stone art objects. Decorative marble inlay objects, made by the artisans of Agra, are of special mention. Inlay work began in the workshops of Florence in Italy around the end of 16th century AD. This was known as 'Pietra Dura'. This art was introduced in India during the Mughal rule and was imitated and reinterpreted in a native style. Tajmahal, Etmad-ud-daula's Tomb and other Mughal monuments are several examples of this art.

Decorative bed, chair, table, different types of sculptures, decorative partitions are some examples of wooden handicrafts which are in this museum. Apart from the above, the museum also houses different types of arms i.e. sword, shield, spear, musket, toy canon, etc.; art objects made of china clay and ceramics; etc.

For the last few years ,the museum have launched various cultural awareness campaign to connect the people and students with the heritage and museum in joint collaboration with the Maithili Sahitya Sansthan, Patna under direction of Dr. Shiva Kumar Mishra (Assistant Curator), assisted by Shri Bhairab Lal Das (Secretary, Maithili Sahitya Sansthan), Dr. Ashok Kumar Sinha (Directorate of Museum, Bihar), Chandra Prakash (Gallery Assistant, M.L. Singh Museum), Dr. Ayodhya Nath Jha (Head of the Department of AIH, LMNU, Darbhanga) Dr. Avanindra Kumar Jha, Dr. Sushant Kumar and Murari Kumar Jha (Maithili Sahitya Sansthan). Due to these programmes, people of Ojhoul, Dekuli and Ber- Harinagar villages of Darbhanga District have handed over ancient stone Sculptures of Vishnu and Shivalingas for safe keeping in the museum. Various heritage lovers, District Administration and Police Administration of Darbhanga & Madhubani and social activists like Manoj Kumar Singh & Ram Kumar Mishra (Ojhoul) etc. actively supported in creating cultural awareness programme among the masses. I am thanking to M/s Aditya Enterprises, Patna specially Faqeer Mohammad & Rakesh Kumar Gupta for their cooperation in the publication work.

I am highly thankful to Professor (Dr.) Ratneshwar Mishra, Former Head of the Department History, LNMU, Darbhanga, Dr. Umesh Chandra Dwivedi, Former Director, Museums, Government of Bihar and Dr. Jalaj Kumar Tiwari, Assistant Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological survey of India, Vaishali Museum, for their co-operation in various ways.

- Dr. Shiva Kumar Mishra

Assistant Curator,

M.L. Singh Museum, Darbhanga



Ivory Cot, Acc No.- 21



Hauda (Ivory), Acc No.- 22



Mirror (Wood & Ivory), Acc No.- 12





Jewellery Box(Wood & Ivory), Acc No.- 783/ 77





Sofa (Ivory), Acc No.- 24







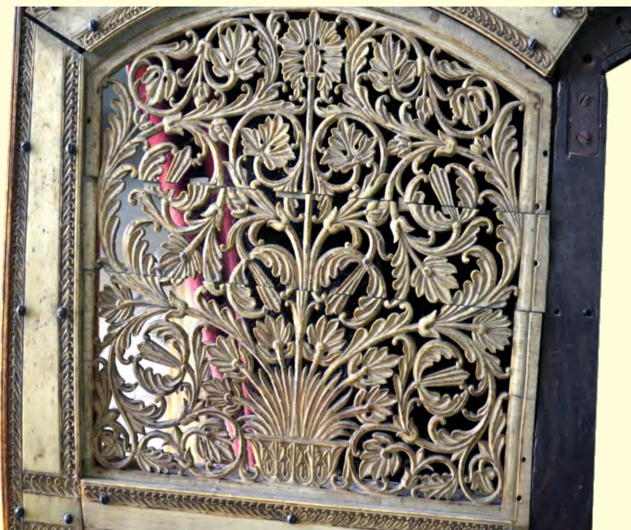
Ivory Hauda, Acc No.- 23



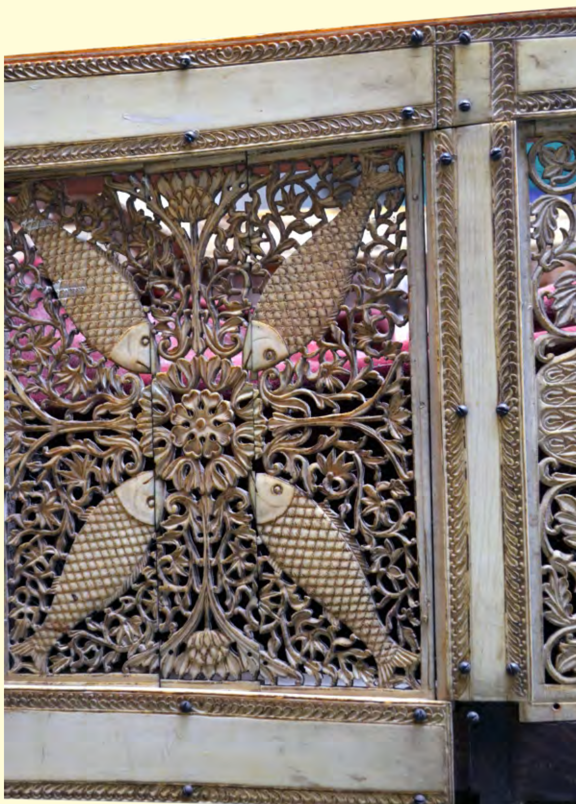




Ivory Hauda, Acc No.- 23









Close up Views of Ivory Hauda



Close up View of Ivory Hauda



Deity (Stone), Acc No.- 756



Buddha (Stone),
Acc No.- 565/ 77 (759)



Chhatrapati Shivaji (Ivory)
Acc No.- 1066/ 77(44)



Shiva Family(Stone), Acc No.- 560/ 77 (755)



Elephant (Wood), Acc No.- 747



Almirah (Ivory & Wood), Acc No.- 828



Almirah (Ivory & Wood), Acc No.- 830



Ivory Throne, Acc No.- 5



Royal Souvenirs(Wood & Metal), Acc No.- 742



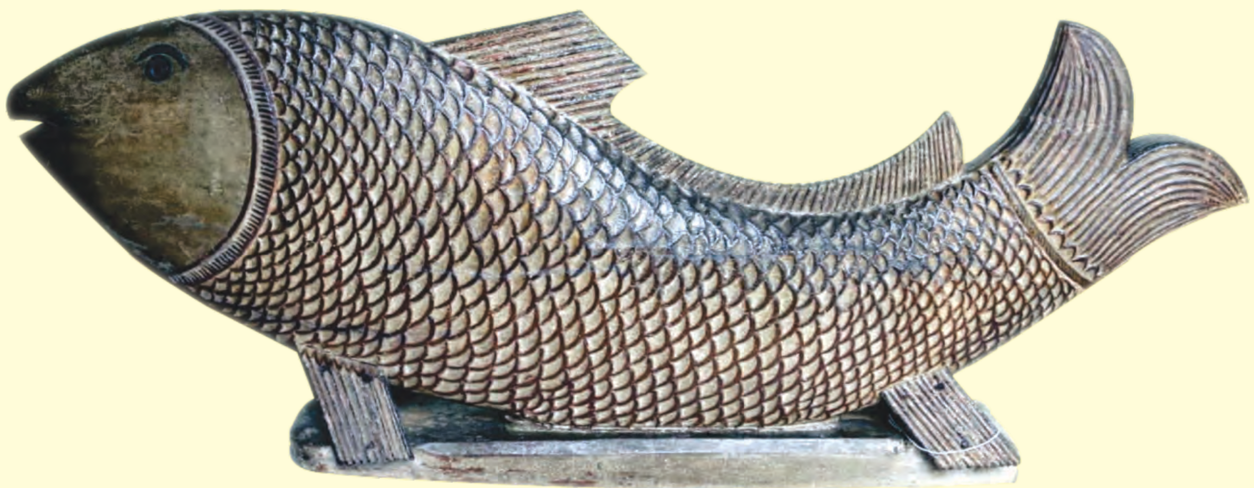
Table (Wood), Acc No.- 120



Palki (Wood & Metal), Acc No.- 4



Box (Wood), Acc No.- 137



Fish (Wood), Acc No.- 128



Pictorial of Buddha's Birth (Wood), Acc No.- 116



Burmese Temple (Wood),
Acc No.- 168



Mahishasuramardini(Wood),
Acc No.- 147



Wall Bracket (Wood & Ivory),
Acc No.- 73



Wall Bracket (Wood),
Acc No.- 912



Vase (Metal), Acc No.- 179



Vase(Metal), Acc No.- 214



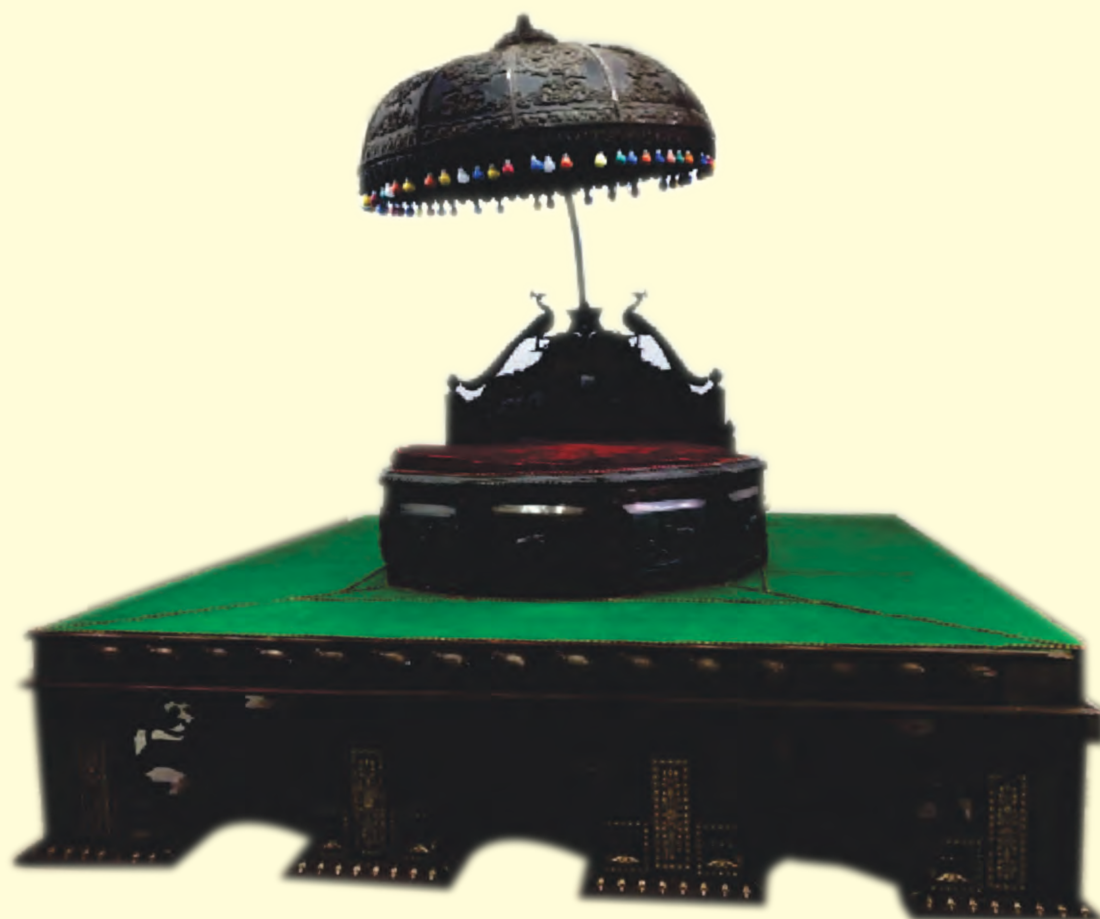
Lady (Wood), Acc No.- 129



Water Filter (Ceramic), Acc No.- 827



Mahishamardini (Ivory), Acc No.- 924/ 77 (27)





Royal Throne (Wood, Ivory & Metal), Acc No.- 1



Buddha (Stone), Acc No.- 792





Pillar with Durga(Stone), Acc No.- 793



Vishnu(Stone), Ojhoul, Acc No.- 1000

Published by : The Maharajadhiraj Lakshmishwar Singh Museum, Darbhanga (Directorate of Museum), Department of Art, Culture & Youth, Government of Bihar ; On Museum Week (24-31 Jan.) 2020.

Printed by- Aditya Enterprises, Patna #9576099416